



WINTER GAMES CHALLENGE | *Channel Your Inner Olympian*

FOR THIS ADVENTURE, PARTICIPATE IN A WINTER SPORT

This challenge is designed to get your child excited about winter sports and outdoor play! Utah is getting ready for the 2034 Winter Olympic Games, and these fun activities will help your child feel like a real winter athlete!

WHY PLAY IN THE WINTER?

Winter play is essential for sensory and physical development!

- **Gross Motor Skills:** Pushing snow, pulling a sled, and balancing develop large muscle groups and coordination.
- **Sensory Input:** Feeling the cold, wet texture of snow provides unique sensory input that helps children focus and regulate their bodies.
- **Simple Science:** Children discover basic physics (sliding, friction, melting) just by playing!

● **CRITICAL SAFETY WARNINGS** ●

Winter fun requires warm layers and constant checks for cold. Please follow these safety rules at all times:

- **Dress Warmly:** Always wear layers, waterproof gloves, hats, and warm boots.
- **Check Fingers and Toes:** Be very aware of your child's fingers, toes, and nose. If they start feeling cold, get inside and warm up immediately! Keep the activity fun and pleasant; avoid having a bad experience because they got too cold!
- **Sledding Safety:** Only sled on gentle slopes that are free of trees, rocks, and roads. Always walk up the side of the hill, not the sledding path.
- **Ice Safety:** NEVER walk on frozen ponds or lakes in Utah. It is rarely cold enough for the ice to be safe and solid. Stay away from large sheets of ice unless supervised in a certified ice rink. If visiting an ice rink, ask about their loaner helmets and skating trainers—they make learning safe and easy!





SLEDDING OLYMPICS

What To Do

At a safe, gentle snow hill: Help your child pull their own sled (great heavy work!) up the hill.

For safety and fun: A trusted adult or older sibling should accompany a younger preschooler down the hill.

Learning Goal

Develops strong muscles (gross motor skills) and coordination. It encourages bravery by trying thrilling speed and sliding.

For older preschoolers: Teach them how to lean their bodies side to side to help steer the sled slightly and how to put a foot down to slow down or stop.

SNOW FORT BUILDERS

What To Do

Work as a team to build something big out of snow, like a small wall, a giant snowball, or a cozy snow fort. Use small shovels and buckets, or just your hands, to pack the snow tightly. Have your child help pat and smooth the final creation.

Learning Goal

Builds teamwork and sharing as children work together to lift and stack snow. Shaping the snow helps strengthen hands for small motor skills.

SNOW PUCK PRACTICE (LIKE HOCKEY)

What To Do

Make a puck: Pack a snowball very tightly into a hard disk (a puck). Give your child a broom, a plastic hockey stick, or a safe sturdy branch. Have them gently tap or push the "puck" along the flat snow toward a goal (like a bucket or a stick).

Learning Goal

Improves hand-eye coordination and gross motor skills (swinging the stick). It introduces the fun of a classic winter sport!

ICE BLOCKING (THE DESERT SLIDERS)

What To Do

No snow? No problem! Find a grassy hill that isn't too steep. Put your child on a large, smooth block of ice (often found at grocery stores or convenience stores) wrapped in a towel. Have them slide down the hill on the block! They can practice sitting, or even try sliding a small toy down the block.

Learning Goal

Provides the fun of sliding and speed, even without snow! It is a great way to learn about friction (the slipperiness of ice).





WINTER ADVENTURE CHALLENGE | *Frosty Fun and Good Times Galore*

FOR THIS ADVENTURE, EXPLORE THE OUTDOORS IN THE WINTER

Utah is famous around the world for its snow. However, getting outside during this season requires some creativity and determination. Discover the benefits of outdoor activities in Utah's wintery landscapes.

Winter Photography - Experiment with photography during winter, capturing the dramatic effects of frost, snow, lower angles of sunlight, and the prominent colors in the landscape.

Winter Art - Snow is an excellent art medium. You can use water mixed with food dye as paint and, using a spray bottle, create your artwork on the snow.

Snow Sculptures - Get creative with snow and other natural materials as you sculpt snow into fantastic shapes.

Build a Snow Fort - This article by [Childhood by Nature](#) provides helpful inspiration and information about snow forts and structures.

Winter Night Hike - There is something magical about a quiet, bright, winter night. Bundle up and take a walk outside. See how many plants you can identify, animal tracks you can spot, and constellations you recognize.

Cross-country/Nordic Skiing - A great way to get exercise in the snow, cross-country skiing offers a full-body workout while letting you explore peaceful, scenic winter trails.

Ice Fishing - Drill a hole in the ice and spend the day on the frozen lake, patiently waiting for a bite. Ice fishing is a relaxing way to enjoy the outdoors and connect with nature during winter.

Sledding, Tubing, or Ice-blocking - Classic winter fun! Kids can slide down hills on sleds or tubes or try ice-blocking in southern Utah, where large ice blocks are used instead of traditional sleds.

Build a Snowball Catapult - Construct a catapult for the ultimate snowball fight.

Cross-country/Nordic Skiing - A great way to get exercise in the snow, cross-country skiing offers a full-body workout while letting you explore peaceful, scenic winter trails.

DIY Bird Feeder - Make a bird feeder to support local wildlife through the winter and enjoy watching birds in your backyard. An easy option is to roll pine cones in peanut butter and birdseed to create simple, natural bird feeders. Learn how here.

TAKE IT UP A NOTCH!

Snowmobiling - Speed through Utah's snowy backcountry and explore scenic areas that are typically inaccessible by foot. With supervision, snowmobiling can be an exhilarating winter activity for older youth.

Winter Survival Skills - Organize a winter survival activity where kids learn practical outdoor skills like building an emergency shelter or starting a fire in the snow (under supervision).

Winter Wildlife Tracking - Track animal prints in the snow and learn more about local wildlife in the winter months!





Experiment with Salt and Ice - Explore the effects of salt on ice in different conditions.

Fat Tire Bike Riding - Ride specially equipped bikes with wide tires that can handle snowy trails, making for a thrilling winter biking experience through Utah's winter landscapes.

Frozen Bubble Art - On cold days (around 14°F or lower), try blowing bubbles and watching them freeze, creating intricate patterns and shapes that can be captured on camera.

Hockey - Whether on a rink or a frozen pond, hockey is an exciting and competitive way for youth to stay active and develop teamwork and coordination.

Ice Climbing - For the adventurous, ice climbing provides the chance to scale frozen waterfalls and ice-covered rock faces, often with the guidance of a professional instructor.

Ice Skating - Glide across frozen ponds or outdoor rinks and enjoy the crisp winter air while learning basic skating skills.

Polar Bear Plunge - For those brave enough, the Polar Bear Plunge involves diving into icy waters. It is a fun and challenging way to test your limits while participating in community events.

Snowshoeing - Explore winter landscapes by strapping on snowshoes and trekking through the snow, whether on groomed trails or off the beaten path.

Winter Stargazing - With clear skies and shorter days, winter nights can be ideal for stargazing. Youth can learn about constellations, the winter sky, or even try winter constellations like Orion.

Other Winter Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematic (STEM) Activities - Share any other outdoor winter STEM experiments you've done!

(Note: Indoor experiments will not count.)

Winter Camping - Take your camping skills to the next level by camping in the snow. Winter camping will challenge you to be resourceful and teach valuable outdoor survival skills.

Winter Disc Golf - Disc golf courses remain open year-round, but playing in the winter adds a fun twist with snow-covered baskets and the challenge of navigating frosty, sometimes slippery terrain.

Winter Geocaching - Use a GPS device or smartphone app for a winter geocaching adventure. Many caches are hidden in winter-friendly areas, and it can be a fun way to explore while getting outside.

Winter Hike - Bundle up and hike on snow-covered trails or the try hiking trails Southern Utah desert, where the quiet beauty of winter offers a serene and peaceful way to enjoy the outdoors.

Winter Photography - Experiment with photography during winter, capturing the dramatic effects of frost, snow, lower angles of sunlight, and the prominent colors in the landscape.

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